PROCEEDINGS OF THE
ROYAL ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON
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GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 5TH NOVEMBER, 1947, at 5.30 p.m.

AGENDA

1. Confirmation of the Proceedings of the General Meeting held on 15th October, 1947.
2. Recommendations of candidates for Fellowship.
3. Announcement of election of new Fellows.
4. Additions to the Library :—

Presented.

Rambur, P. *Faune entomologique de l'Andalousie.* Livraison 5. (Facsimile reprint.) 8vo. Madrid, 1942. [Instituto Espanol de Entomologia.]

Imms, A. D. *Insect natural history.* 8vo. London, 1947. [The Publishers.]

In addition, separates have been presented by the Chicago Natural History Museum, the British Museum (Natural History), Mr. E. F. Gilmour, Prof. F. Silvestri, Dr. F. Lane, Dr. A. da Costa Lima, Mr. R. S. Crass, the American Entomological Society, Mr. L. E. Couchman, Dr. Rajindar Pal, the Smithsonian Institution, and Dr. H. Cleu.

5. Admissions of Fellows.
6. Communications.

Migratory Insects in Britain.

The meeting will be devoted to a discussion, to be opened by the President, on migrant insects observed in Great Britain during the last few years. It is hoped that the discussion will cover the whole field in the widest possible sense. No organised programme has been devised, but all those having observations of interest are strongly urged to bring them to the attention of the meeting.

If circumstances permit tea will be served in the Library before the meeting.

NOTICES

A card index of Fellows' addresses arranged **on a geographical basis** is now available for the use of Fellows in the Society's Rooms. Addresses in Great Britain are grouped under counties ; elsewhere under Dominions, Colonies, Foreign States, etc.

In order to enable Fellows of the Society to meet informally after General Meetings the formation of a **Dining Club** has been suggested. Fellows of the Society who are interested in this proposal are invited to inform the Secretary as soon as possible.

ADMISSION OF FELLOWS

Any Fellow who has not been formally admitted to the Society under Chapter XIV, Section 4 of the Bye-Laws and attends the meeting on 5th November, 1947, is requested to inform the Secretary before 5.15 p.m. on that date.

Proceedings of the General Meeting held on 15th October, 1947.

Dr. C. B. Williams, M.A., President, in the Chair.

Present, 51 Fellows and 12 Visitors.

The minutes of the General Meeting held on 1st October, 1947, were confirmed, and signed by the President.

The names of the following candidates for election were read : For the first time : G. M. Haggett.

For the second time : H. Bhattacharjee, B.A., A. L. Capener, Lt.-Col. J. H. Cater, I.M.S., B. O. C. Gardiner, Miss P. C. Gardiner, B.Sc., T. J. Honeybourne, J. W. Hughes, B.Sc., P. Lepesme, G. McCartney, G. A. Matthews, A. G. Maycock, G. N. Philipson, B.Sc., J. Phipps, B.Sc., M. D. Price, B.Sc., A.R.C.S., Lt. N. W. Rockingham, R.N., G. E. Shewell, M.Sc., D. A. Tidman, Miss N. Waloff, Ph.D., R. W. Watson, H. H. West and M. A. Wynter-Blyth.

Thanks were voted to donors of gifts to the Library since the last meeting.

Lt.-Col. W. B. L. Manley and Mr. R. G. Donald signed the Obligation Book and were admitted as Fellows.

The Secretary, in the absence of Colonel Fraser, read the following note amplifying his communication, the title of which appeared on page 32:—

" Three newly emerged specimens of *Cossus cossus* L. were found clinging to grass stems in a small clearing partially shut in by a plantation of *S. viminalis* in which the larvae had obviously bred. Subsequent search for the empty pupae revealed the fact that the larvae had pupated in the crowns of nests of *Lasius flavus* Fabricius, a large number of mounds of which filled the ground of the small clearing. The exhibit shows the two first pupal cases found, one barely showing, the other almost extruded from the cocoon. Further search discovered nearly a score of others, all in similar situations. The cocoons, as exhibited, show that they have been constructed from the fine loamy soil cemented together with web. The problem arises as to whether the ants were kept at bay by the disagreeable scent of the larvae, by some irritating constituent of the exudation of the larvae, or whether the latter suffered the attentions of the ants, trusting to their tough, leathery epidermis to protect them from attack. Numbers of the empty pupal cases had been disturbed by the burrowing of rabbits ; those shown were found in the closest apposition to ants and masses of ant eggs.

The exhibit was cut out with a knife and subsequently embedded in plaster-of-paris, a method which I have adopted before for the burrowings of other insects and one which permits the handling of exhibits without the fear of crumbling. The site of the pupations is normally flooded for most of the year or in a very moist state, so that the nests afforded the only dry spots in which to pupate."

In the discussion following this communication Professor Carpenter mentioned that he had made a similar observation, and Dr. Richards pointed out that, as the top half of such mounds was often dry, they were uninhabited by ants, which had burrowed deeper in search of moister soil.

In the discussion which followed Dr. Uvarov's communication, an abstract of which appeared on page 32, Dr. van Emden raised the question as to whether the occurrence of the parasite *Stomatorrhina lunata* Fabricius, which is rare in England, might be correlated with the occurrence of its host. Dr. Williams mentioned a large-scale outbreak of *Schistocerca peregrina* in East Africa in 1928, when, within three days, between 40 and 50 per cent. of the egg masses were parasitised by *S. lunata.* In Tanganyika three hours after the arrival of a swarm of locusts, 150 specimens of *Sphex aegyptiacus* were found in a very small area, although this insect had not previously been seen. Both flies and wasps appeared to move with the swarm, as none were observed when it disappeared.

Mr. J. C. M. Gardner inquired whether *Trox* was known to feed on locust eggs, to which Dr. Uvarov replied that this beetle was a well-known predator of locusts. Dr. Hinton mentioned that this insect was usually associated with fur and feathers and not particularly with locusts.

Dr. W. H. Thorpe gave an account of a swarm of Sepsid flies, kindly identified by Dr. J. Smart as *Sepsis tonsa* Duda, observed on a bramble bush in the Adams Road Bird Sanctuary, Cambridge, on 21st September, 1947. Specimens were exhibited. The bush was about four feet high and the flies completely covered every stem and twig and both upper and under surfaces of every leaf over an area of about three feet in diameter, including bind-weed and nettle leaves which were mingled with the bramble bush. The flies were in constant motion walking slowly about the plants, jostling each other as they moved, many of them flicking or waving their wings and gently moving their halteres in the manner so characteristic of the family. The two sexes were present in almost exactly equal proportions. There was no taking wing and no evidence of copulation on the plant, although at least one pair mated later in captivity. Similar swarms of *Sepsis cynipsea* L. had been described by Coe (1943, *Ent. mon. Mag.* **79** : 251) and by Donisthorpe (1934, *Ent. mon. Mag.* **79** : 181). The moving of the wings, which have an apical black spot, and of the halteres, which are white, suggested some form of mass sexual display and recalled the "courtship" swarms of Dolichopodid flies such as *Peocilobothrus nobilitatus*, which also have characteristically spotted wings. That it was a hibernation phenomenon seemed unlikely in view of previous records which were simply listed as "summer." Little definite knowledge of the larval habits of the Sepsids was available. Many were thought to be saprophagous. One of the few to be studied adequately was *Sepsis impunctata* Macquart in Egypt, which is a dung feeder (Hafez, 1939, *Bull. Soc. Fouad Ier Ent.* **23**: 319–325). It was hoped that entomologists would be on the look-out for these insects and would help to accumulate information likely to throw light on the cause and function of these swarms.

Mr. R. G. Donald mentioned having seen large colonies of STAPHYLINIDAE in Trinidad, when the insects were motionless, the sexes in this case also being approximately equal. Dr. Hinton said he had observed swarms of the same beetle in Mexico, but in this case they seemed to be moving.

Mr. A. W. McKenny Hughes exhibited some living termites from Chile, the identification of which was not certain, but which were believed to be a species of *Cryptotermes*.

Mr. Riley, on behalf of Mr. C. D. L. Wharry, exhibited two winged females of the ant *Acanthomyops mixtus* Nylander taken while flying round an electric light bulb at night in a London room on 14th October. The insects had been identified by Mr. Donisthorpe, who said that it was unusual for them to be taken after early August.

Dr. F. I. van Emden exhibited a living specimen of the South African weevil *Brachycerus monachus* Fhrs., which was found at Litherland, Lancs., at the end of September and brought to the British Museum (Natural History) for identification. Both the fresh condition and the presence of pincer-like mandibular appendages indicated that the specimen had hatched from its pupa in this country. Short-nosed like the familiar BRACHYDERINAE and OTIORRHYNCHINAE, the BRACHYCERINAE differed from these by the absence of a mandibular scar left by a deciduous appendage, which is present at the time of emergence from the pupae. Some other groups without mandibular scar had, nevertheless, also proved to possess the appendage. The BRACHYCERINAE differed further by the not elbowed antennae, a character which was primitive in many groups of Rhynchophora but probably acquired in BRACHYCERINAE. Larvae and pupae of *B. albidentatus* Gyllenhal, introduced into the U.S.A. with garlic, were also circulated and the larval characters discussed. As indigenous adelognathous weevils were in many cases known to reproduce parthenogenetically, an attempt was made to obtain eggs, and in feeding experiments with Iris and eight genera of Liliaceous garden-plants, *Hemerocallis* and *Kniphofia* were readily accepted. Uses of *Brachycerus*-adults made by natives were mentioned, and a picture of a chain of snuff-boxes made from *Brachycerus*-bodies (Horn, 1908, *Dtsch. ent. Z.* **52**, pl. 1) was shown on the screen.

N. D. RILEY, *Honorary Secretary.*

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 19th November, at 5.30 p.m.

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